

## **Takoma Transportation Study Public Meeting notes**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The first series of three public meetings were held with representatives of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission, local community groups, stakeholders, and the citizens to discuss the proposed scope of work and schedule for the traffic study, and to serve as a forum for the public to provide input. The public meetings dates and locations are listed below:

- October 8, 2002, Arch Hall, MedStar Manor, 6000 New Hampshire Avenue, DC
- October 9, 2002, Takoma Park, MD Municipal Building, 7500 Maple Avenue, MD
- October 10, 2002, Washington Theological Seminary, 6896 Laurel Avenue, DC

The introduction in meetings 1 and 2 was done by Mr. Damon Harvey (DDOT) and in meeting 3 by Mr. Dan Tangherlini (DDOT). In the remaining of this document, Mtg 1 refers to the meeting on October 8, 2002, Mtg 2 refers to the meeting on October 9, 2002, and Mtg 3 refers to October 10, 2002. The list of meeting participants is posted at the end of the document.

### **CITIZENS COMMENTS/QUESTIONS**

#### **Citizens Comments/Questions about Transportation Issues**

##### Traffic

- A question was asked as to how the list of intersections to be counted was determined. It was explained that the scope was developed in conjunction with the ANC and project stakeholders. Additional intersections will be added to the list based on input provided by citizens during the scoping meetings (Mtg 1).
- Citizens noted that there are traffic problems at the intersection of Blair Road, Cedar Street, and 4<sup>th</sup> Street (Mtgs 1, 2 and 3).
- Citizens asked what the counts are going to be used for. It was explained that the counts are going to be used to develop a traffic model that help evaluate existing and future traffic conditions (Mtg 1).
- A citizen commented that a protected left turn phase at Georgia Avenue and Blair Street would bring more traffic into the neighborhood streets (Mtg 1).
- A citizen commented that in the development of future plans, the issue of how to satisfy both residents and business needs to be address (Mtg 1).
- A citizen asked that roadway classification of each of the roads in the study area be identified in the study and documentation on roadway classification be provided (Mtg 1).
- Citizens indicated that roadways with heavy traffic volumes are, N. Capital Street, Eastern Avenue, Van Buren Street and Kansas Avenue (Mtg 1)

- A citizen asked that the installation of a stop sign at N. Capital Street and Tuckerman Street be evaluated (Mtg 1).
- Several citizens indicated that commuters pass through traffic is a major concern in the study area. The origin-destination study should quantify the pass-through traffic (Mtg 2).
- A citizen asked for clarification of terms: turning movements versus 24-hour counts. It was explained that turning movement counts are counts of every movement at intersections while the 24-hour counts are mid-block counts that provide information of daily traffic on a roadway link. The transportation model is developed with the peak hour turning movement counts (Mtg 2).
- A citizen asked if congestion would be reduced traffic congestion with this study. The study will include, among others, recommendations to reduce traffic congestion at critical locations (Mtg 2).
- A citizen asked that the study consider traffic cutting through alleys (Mtg 2). It will be considered.
- A citizen emphasized that the study should not be about cars only. It should consider transit, pedestrians and bicycles (Mtg 2).
- A citizen noted that traffic congestion on Georgia Avenue at Piney Branch during rush hours is an issue (Mtg 3).
- A citizen requested that the issue of traffic from MD to DC using Aspen Street as a cut-through route be assessed (Mtg 3).
- A citizen requested that the issue of traffic from Eastern Avenue to Sandy Spring Road blocking Walnut Street during rush hours be considered (Mtg 3).
- Citizens asked to evaluate speeding on residential streets and develop options to control the speeding. Traffic calming measures will be recommended to address these type of issues. However, these measures will not be implemented until the completion of the study to ensure consistency with all of the study recommendations (Mtg 3).
- Citizens asked that no through traffic or no left turns during rush hours be considered at critical locations (Mtg 3).
- A citizen asked to assess the feasibility of installing a traffic light at the intersection of Eastern Avenue and Laurel Street (Mtg 3).
- Citizens asked to identify traffic issues on 6<sup>th</sup> Street between Butternut Street to Piney Branch Road and the intersection of Piney Branch Road and Cedar Street (Mtg 3).
- Citizens asked to consider reducing cut-through traffic on Aspen Street between Georgia Avenue and Piney Branch Road by installing “DO NOT ENTER” signs during certain hours (Mtg 3).
- Citizens noted that traffic flow on Georgia Avenue during rush hours is a concern (Mtg 3).
- Citizens asked to evaluate limiting left turns during peak hours at Blair Road, Cedar Street, and 4<sup>th</sup> Street (Mtg 3).
- Citizens indicated that improving traffic flow on major arterials is important, especially commuter traffic on Georgia Avenue (Mtg 3).

- Citizens noted that the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Elder Street is critical. Walter Reed needs to open other entrances. It was explained that Walter Reed is preparing an update of their Master Plan that includes improvements at this intersection (Mtg 3).
- A citizen noted that it was important to increase roadway capacity to handle heavy vehicle traffic or alternatively decrease heavy vehicle traffic on residential street such as Philadelphia Avenue (Mtg 3).
- Citizens asked that traffic flow from Metro to Carroll Street and Eastern Avenue during peak hours be assessed. Parking south of CVS block the view of traffic making turns (Mtg 3).
- A citizen asked that the addition of a left turn lane on Aspen Street to Blair Street be considered (Mtg 3).
- A citizen asked that a red light camera for left turns on red at Piney Branch Road and Aspen Street be considered (Mtg 3).
- A citizen asked that the implementation of an HOV lane on Georgia Avenue be evaluated (Mtg 3).
- A citizen noted that Walter Reed causes traffic congestion between 6:30 AM and 8:30 AM (Mtg 3).
- Citizens noted that cut-through traffic on Blair Road is a concern. Reduce cut-through traffic on local streets (Mtg 3).
- Citizens noted that increased enforcement on Blair Road, Butternut Street and 4<sup>th</sup> Street should be considered (Mtg 3).
- Citizens provided the following suggestions: Repave 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Blair Road, make 4<sup>th</sup> Street one-way, no left turns from Blair Road onto Piney Branch Road during rush hours, and re-stripe or Channelize Piney Branch Road at Blair Road (Mtg 3).

#### Traffic Calming

- Citizens would like the study to evaluate traffic calming at the following locations
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Street (Mtg 1).
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Street around the 6800 block (Mtg 1).
  - 6900 block of 8<sup>th</sup> Street (Mtg 1).
  - Eastern Avenue between Georgia Avenue and Blair Street (Mtg 1).
  - 700-900 block of Aspen Street (Mtg 3).
- A citizen made the following comments with respect to traffic calming – (Mtg 2)
  - Don't like use of stop signs as traffic calming.
  - Don't want a stop sign on every block.
  - Consider using speed bumps.
- A brief description of traffic calming measures was presented (Mtg 3).

#### Transit

- Citizens asked that the study assess the proposed changes to the Metro Station and bus facilities (Mtg 1).
- A citizen asked that the future bus facilities needs be assessed by the study (Mtg 1).

- A citizen asked that the study evaluate future needs for the Metro station (Mtg 1).
- A citizen stated that improvements should be implemented to allow buses to move more efficiently to encourage people to use buses (Mtg 1).
- A citizen requested that the look at alternative transportation modes, such as short bus routes, or Georgia Avenue light rail (Mtg 2).
- Citizens noted that they were concerned that WMATA has not provided adequate data for the assessment of future bus service at Takoma Metro (Mtg 2).
- Citizens would like this study to be an independent professional realistic study of transit needs in Takoma (Mtg 2).
- Citizens would like for this study to take a close look at bus service to Metro (Mtg 2)
  - Entrances, bus bays, and impact on area streets
  - Make sure all the information on bus service that is out there is incorporated now and in the future
  - Relation to Purple Line
- Citizens want the information from the origin and destination study to be used in thinking of mass transit alternatives (Mtg 2).
- A citizen suggested differentiating car use by income levels – lower incomes use mass transit more (Mtg 2).
- Citizens indicated that the impact of the proposed development at the Metro site should be carefully evaluated (Mtg 2).
- A citizen asked that the study look at the impact of Purple Line and bike trail at Takoma Station (Mtg 3).
- Citizens indicated that the study should determine the number of bus bays and parking spaces needed at the Metro station (Mtg 3).
- A citizen noted that priorities should be set up to allow buses to move faster than passenger cars to encourage people use public transit (Mtg 3).
- Citizens noted that Greyhound buses and commercial buses travel on local street (Mtg 3).
- Citizens indicated that the provision of Taxi Stand near entrance of Takoma Station is a critical issue. The citizens want the taxi stand near the entrance and not in the back of the station (Mtg 3).

### Pedestrians

- Citizens expressed concern for slow walkers, persons with disabilities and seniors in area. Adequate facilities should be provided to address their needs (Mtg 2).
- A citizen noted that pedestrian facilities on the east side of Metro are not adequate (Mtg 3).
- Citizens noted that the study should evaluate pedestrian access to the Metro station. Provide safe environment for pedestrians to walk from Metro to home (Mtg 3).
- Citizens noted that Disabled access from Eastern Avenue south of Laurel Street should be improved (Mtg 3).
- A citizen noted that school kids were involved in an accident at Dahlia Street and Georgia Avenue (Mtg 3).

- A citizen noted that there have been several accidents on Blair Road and Van Buren Street (Mtg 3).

### Bikes

- Citizens indicated that the effect of the Metropolitan Branch Trail bike facility should be evaluated in this study (Mtgs 1, 2 and 3).
- A citizen noted that more parking for bikes, such as bike racks should be provided at the Metro station (Mtg 3).
- A citizen noted that bike access on Aspen Street and Blair Road should be looked at (Mtg 3).
- Citizens noted that a safe environment for bikers should be provided (Mtgs 1, 2 and 3).

### Parking

- Citizens noted that there is commuter parking at private parking lots: Funeral home next to 7-11 on Carroll Street, church on 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Butternut (Mtg 1).
- A citizen suggested the implementation of parking meters at Piney Branch Road between Blair Road and Eastern Street (Mtg 1).
- A citizen recommended the use of innovative parking meter schemes. For example, restrictions for different uses could be implemented by allowing the first 20 minutes free in business area (Mtg 1)
- A citizen noted that the parking issues on Eastern Avenue, Carroll Street, and Willow Street should be addressed by the study (Mtg 1).
- A citizen asked that the study evaluate future parking needs for the metro site. Do we need same as now? (Mtg 2).
- A citizen noted that parking management techniques should be considered – short term, all day, meters, etc. (Mtg 2).
- Citizens asked that the study look at the issues of parking based on new developments; impacts on residential area. Also, look at all issues of residential parking (Mtg 2).
- A citizen noted that in the assessment of the proposed Municipal parking proposal; management of existing on-street and surface parking; future use of surface parking lots should be considered (Mtg 2).
- Citizens noted that the impact on changes of parking garage at Metro should be evaluated by the study (Mtg 3).
- A citizen asked that angle parking for 4<sup>th</sup> Street from Cedar Street to Butternut Street and no parking area during rush hours be considered (Mtg 3).
- A citizen suggested the installation of parking meters on Piney Branch Road from Eastern Ave to Blair Road (Mtg 3).
- A citizen suggested the implementation of No parking during peak hours on Georgia Avenue. Another citizen however noted that there are many residences on Georgia Avenue and the residents may be affected significantly (Mtg 3).

### Sidewalks

- Citizens indicated that sidewalk condition and the lack of ADA ramps be evaluated by the study (Mtg 2).
- A citizen noted that between Walnut and Willow the sidewalks are in bad condition (Mtg 2).
- Citizens noted the following concerns with respect the condition or lack of sidewalk at the following locations:
  - Walnut Street and Eastern Avenue Mtg 3)
  - South of Laurel on Eastern Avenue (Mtg 3)
  - Carroll Street to Metro (Mtg 3)
  - No sidewalks on Blair Road between Geranium to Piney Branch Road (Mtg 3)
  - No sidewalks on Sandy Spring Road (Mtg 3)
  - Need paved sidewalks on Dogwood Street between 8<sup>th</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Street (Mtg 3)
  - Blair Road from Piney Branch Road to 4<sup>th</sup> Street (Mtg 3)
  - Narrowness of sidewalks surrounding Metro area (4ft too small) (Mtg 3)
- A citizen noted that utilities poles block sidewalks. A suggestion was made to bury utilities at spot location to minimize encroachments (Mtg 3).
- A citizen recommended checking Montgomery Sidewalk Program (Mtg 3)

### **Citizens Comments/Questions about Project Scope**

- Citizens made recommendations with respect to which intersections should be counted. It was explained that some recent counts are available for some of the intersections listed in the scope of services. A list of intersections to be counted was developed to address comments received during the meetings and to account for intersections where counts are available. The proposed (final) list of intersections to be counted is as follow:
  1. Georgia Ave, Alaska Ave, & Kalmia Rd
  2. Piney Branch Rd & Eastern Ave
  3. Piney Branch Rd & Blair Rd
  4. Piney Branch Rd & Butternut St
  5. Piney Branch Rd & Aspen St
  6. Blair Rd & Van Buren St
  7. Carroll St, Eastern Ave, & Willow St
  8. Piney Branch Rd & Georgia Ave
  9. Eastern Avenue and Laurel St
  10. Van Buren Street and Eastern Ave
  11. Kansas Avenue and Eastern Ave
  12. New Hampshire Avenue and Eastern Ave
  13. Piney Branch Rd & Philadelphia Ave
  14. Carroll Avenue and Laurel St
- The term “queuing observations” should be clarified in the scope. Queuing observations will be clarified in the scope (Mtg 2).

- The turning movement counts will be conducted from 7:00 AM – 9:00 AM and from 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM.
- A Citizen asked if accident data will be collected. Accident data will be collected and evaluated in the study (Mtg 2).
- A citizen recommended that public meetings be added at the end of Task 2. Public meetings will be added at the end of Task 2 (Mtg 1).
- Citizens recommended that traffic counts at the following intersections not included in the original scope be added
  - Eastern Avenue and Kansas Avenue (Mtg 1).
  - Van Buren Street and Eastern Avenue (Mtg 1).
- The scope does not specify the forecast year for the evaluation of future conditions. The scope will be modified to note that the study will evaluate a 2010 and a 2020 scenario.
- A citizen requested that a noise study be included in the Scope of Work. Noise issues will be assessed only qualitatively in the study (Mtg 3).

### **Citizens Comments/Questions about Land Use/Developments**

- A citizen noted that the correlation of long-term real estate land use and transportation corridors be considered to preserve right-of-ways for future transportation use possibilities (Mtg 1).
- Citizens want evaluation of conditions in the future with the implementation of new developments in the area. It was noted that future year scenarios will be evaluated (Mtg 1)
- Citizens asked which projects would be considered for future scenarios. Meetings will be conducted with DDOT, Office of Planning, Takoma Park and consultant representatives to establish the levels of development that will be used in the evaluation of future year scenarios. The Small Area Plan will provide guidance in the selection of future year land use levels of development (Mtgs 2 and 3).
- Citizens asked if the impact of future regional development will be taken into consideration. It was noted that the regional development will be taken into consideration (Mtg 2).
- A citizen asked that the trip impacts of the development at the Metro site be considered at different levels. The trips associated with different levels of development at the Metro site should be documented (Mtg 2).

### **Citizens Comments/Questions about environmental impacts**

- Citizens asked that quality of life issues, including noise and vibration of trucks, buses be considered (Mtg 2).
- Citizen suggested providing more trees on both sides of Eastern Avenue to abate noise (Mtg 3).
- Citizens asked that environmental impacts, such as storm water drainage be considered. It was noted that this is beyond the scope of this study (Mtg 3).

## **General Issues**

- Post comments and study material in libraries (Mtgs 1, 2 and 3).
- Provide advance meeting notice, 3 to 4 weeks before the meeting (Mtg 3)
- Consider how can transportation reduce crime problems (Mtg 3)
- A citizen asked what lessons were learned from the Palisades study. The DDOT representative indicated that the main lesson was to involve the public throughout the project (Mtg 2).
- Strongly encourage talking with Montgomery County and Maryland transportation officials. (Mtg 2)
- Montgomery College has transportation plans – need to talk with them. (Mtg 2)
- A citizen asked if there is an environmental impact study in the area (Mtg 3). It was indicated that there is not.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- The Scope of Work will be revised based on the comments received from the three public meetings.
- The consultant will initiate the work setting up meetings with all relevant agencies in Maryland and the District.
- Comments received from three public meetings and other sources will be taken into consideration.
- The second series of three public meetings will be held after Task 2.